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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADANA 000086

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: RELEASED DEP DEPUTIES TOUR SE TURKEY AS PKK TERROR EXPANDS

REF: REFTEL: ADANA 0067

1. (SBU) Summary: Four recently released former DEP deputies, including Leyla Zana, kicked off a five-day tour of southeast Turkey on June 12 with a Diyarbakir rally attended by tens of thousands of enthusiastic supporters. The four deputies called for a six-month extension of PKK/Kongra Gel's recently discontinued ceasefire and urged Turkish authorities to "regain the militants in the hills and prisons." Diyarbakir DEHAP mayor Osman Baydemir called for a general amnesty for PKK/Kongra Gel and an immediate ceasefire when welcoming the group. Meanwhile, PKK/Kongra Gel continued its accelerated terror expanding infiltration into urban areas in two provinces while continuing to provoke violence in rural areas. End Summary.

Released former deputies go on eastern Turkey tour  
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2. (SBU) Four recently released former DEP deputies - Leyla Zana, Orhan Dogan, Hatip Dicle and Selim Sadak - kicked off a five-day tour of southeast Turkey on June 12 with a rally in Diyarbakir attended by approximately 20,000 to 30,000. The four deputies called for both a six-month extension of the PKK/Kongra Gel recently discontinued ceasefire and Turkish authorities' efforts to "regain the militants in the hills and prisons." Diyarbakir DEHAP mayor Osman Baydemir called for a general amnesty for PKK/Kongra Gel members and appealed for an immediate ceasefire and "peace throughout the region." The four continued their tour to large and small cities from Mardin to Van. DEHAP (DEP successor party once removed) Chairman Tuncer Bakirhan accompanied the group on their regional tour. Diyarbakir Mayor Baydemir later in the week called for a fresh regional approach from the AK Party government, which he claimed had left the "Kurdish question" on a back burner since AKP's election.

Meanwhile PKK/Kongra Gel extends attacks into urban areas  
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3. (SBU) There was a June 12 terror attack on a sub-governor's residence in Gercus, Batman province, which probably killed one TNP member and likely two alleged PKK attackers, while wounding several others. Then, on June 13, two probable PKK/Kongra Gel attackers, reportedly using hand grenades (Comment: local contacts reported that press reports of use of "rockets" was inaccurate. End Comment.), attempted to attack a Jandarma social club. Both attackers reportedly were killed in the ensuing clash. Also, on June 13, probable PKK/Kongra Gel reportedly used a command-detonated landmine (comment: it may have been an improvised explosive device (IED), too, given credible reports of police seizures of C-4 caches in this area recently. End Comment.)

4. (SBU) While, until late May, most of the recent violence had been in rural or village areas, there is now a clear shift in tactics to include targets in urban areas. A first such urban attack was narrowly averted on May 28 in Adana's downtown city center. Since then the Gercus and Bingol events confirm the new trend, as does the TNP police arrest of eleven additional alleged PKK members in Adana on June 14 armed with ten kilos of C-4 explosive, whom the TNP says were planning a terrorist activity against the Adana Justice Ministry building.

5. (SBU) Rural violence also continues. There was an attack in Adiyaman June 9, which probably left several security forces dead and more wounded, and a probable PKK/Kongra Gel raid on a small Jandarma station in one of Bingol province's outlying district. Additionally, there were recent attacks in Tunceli and Sirnak province between Jandarma and probable PKK/Kongra Gel terrorists. The two most recent events, both in Hatay province, one June 14 in Dortyol and, again on June 16 in Hassa, show how probable PKK/Kongra Gel militants are trying to destabilize a wide swathe of southeast Turkey.

How this is playing in region  
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6. (SBU) Local contacts in southeastern Turkey told political LES this week that they are relieved by the release of the four former deputies, whom they considered to have been imprisoned unjustly. They said that the Kurdish community in the region is energized by the group of four's presence among them in open gatherings and expressed hope that the group can form the nucleus of a movement to change a dynamic which they otherwise

fear could be headed toward renewed region-wide violence. Contacts also express disappointment in the face of continuing PKK/Kongra Gel attacks in the region. Following the recent attacks, Batman local community leaders, including the province DEHAP chairman, expressed their condolences to State security officials, while some local residents visited the Gercus sub-governors residence and victims' families in Batman to express their condolences personally. Batman merchants staged a silent protest against the recent violence in Batman through shop closings. Tunceli mayors called for an end to violence and expressed hope for regional reconciliation. Regional business leaders express concern that the region's economy, already very weak, will deteriorate further and one Diyarbakir business contact reported already hearing of the postponement of a long-hoped-for agro-industry investment in the province, as well as a hospital construction plan's postponement. Baydemir held a business council on June 16 to assess publicly the most recent business trends in Diyarbakir and elsewhere in southeast Turkey.

7.(SBU) Comment: The mood in the Kurdish community has been buoyed by the former deputies' release and spontaneous celebrations have occurred in many major southeastern Turkish cities throughout the past week. The former deputies, as well as Baydemir, seem interested in playing an intermediary role in the southeast region posting negotiations with Terrorists which seek to raise the profile of "the Kurdish question" on the national agenda. DEHAP, smarting from losses in spring municipal elections, also is eager to try to show leadership to its discouraged Kurdish regional political base. In discussions in recent months with consulate officials, GOT representatives in the region have dismissed prospects for another round of the "return to home law" which was relatively fruitless in late 2003, let alone the general amnesty advocated directly by Baydemir and at least indirectly by the former deputies. Bakirhan's descriptions this week in press interviews of DEHAP as "equidistant" between the Turkish state and PKK/Kongra Gel has also angered officials in Ankara because it did not condemn the PKK/Kongra Gel's use of terror. PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Turkish General Staff Chief General Hilmi Ozkok have been quick to express this anger publicly this week.

18. (SBU) (Comment, cont'd) For now, GOT forces have been proportional in their responses to the PKK/Kongra Gel attacks. This relative restraint generally has been positively noted by the regional Kurdish grass roots leadership. If PKK/Kongra Gel's current strategy is to provoke the State into disproportionate crackdowns in order to rally its support base and active cadres, there could be further intensification of terrorism in the region. This deterioration in the security environment would check significantly implementation of the recently-passed EU Accordance laws in the region. (End Comment).

19. Baghdad minimize considered.

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